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LETTERS OF REV. SAMUEL THOMAS, 1702-1706.³

[*Continued from the July number.*]

[6.]

[TO REV. DR. WOODWARD AND TO THE SOCIETY.]

Addressed: To the Rev. Dr^r Woodward &c.
at Poplar.

From my study at Sir N. Johnson's.
Gov^r of Carolina. 10. Mar: 1703/4.

Rev^d Dr^r

I wrote to you the last year by Captain Cole and did hope for the favour of a line from you by his return which would have been a great satisfaction to me: I most gratefully acknowledge my high obligations particularly for your assistance in procuring for me Holy Orders a blessing for w^{ch} myself and many others (I hope) will bless God to Eternity. I beg of you Rev: Sir to communicate to the hon^{ble} Corporation of which you are a worthy Member the following lines from

Your most obliged, humble servant
S. Thomas

To the Rev. and Hon^{ble} Society for Propagating
the Gospell in Foreign Parts.

Most Rev^d & Hon^{ble} Gentlemen,

Your unworthy but laborious Missionary
whom you sometime since sent to labour in the Ministerial

³ The figures "1702-1710" given in the July issue of this magazine are wrong. They should have been 1702-1706. The Editor was misled by one of Mr. Sainsbury's endorsements on one of the packages of abstracts relating to Mr. Thomas.

Function in the Province of Carolina thinks himself obliged to communicate to you the account of his arrivall and the success of his labours in this Province. Blessed be God after much difficulty and many dangers I safely arrived at Charles Town in Carolina on the 25. Decr 1702. and took the first opportunity of going up in the Country to wait upon our Governor the hon^{ble} Sir N. Johnson who received me with great Kindness and then and ever since has treated me with extraordinary respect and civility: with much kindness his Honor invited my stay in his family and being duly sensible of his duty and obligations to Almighty God, he obligeth me to officiate daily in his house as Chaplain, and to labour on the Lord's Day in the instruction of the Inhabitants of Cooper River which is so thin settled and the Inhabitants live at so wide a distance from each other that I am forced to officiate in 3. severall Branches of the River about 15. miles from each other, and because I can be but with one Congregation on the Lord's Day so each can be supplied but 1. Lord's day in 3. therefore at their request I preach a lecture on the Week Days to each of them, this considering the many miles I must travel to meet each Congregation makes my labours very considerable, but I bless God it is my delight to serve Him and His Infant Church, and my ministerial work is my recreation, I bless God, I have not labored in vain in this Province, for since my coming into these parts, there is a visible abatement of vice and immorality, and many of our People who were careless in religion are prevailed on to a ready and constant attendance on God's Publick worship and I have prevail'd on several to set up the worship of God in their private families and have prevailed with many to a careful preparation for and to participate of the Blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The first time I administered I administered that Holy Ordinance I could find but 5. Communicants but they are now encreased to the number of about 32, and are yet increasing, here being some few young persons who submit to my instructions in order to their being pre-

pared for the Blessed Sacrament at Easter next. By my encouragement about 20. Negroes have learned to read, and I am acquainting them as I have opportunity with the Principles of the Christian Religion, and have lately baptized one Negro man, and hope in some time to find more fitted for that Holy Institution. There haveing been no Minister on this river, who lived regularly and preached practically & constantly, the People are much divided, but I have some reason to hope that severall of them will now come into the Communion of the Church of England, themselves have told me that if I had been in the Country before, I had prevented their separating from the Church. I find by experience that an humble and obliging carriage a moderate and prudent conduct, practical and serious preaching together with a Holy and circumspect life is the more effectual means to remove prejudices out of men's minds agst our Church and Ministers. In great sincerity Gentlemen I assure you, it hath and by Divine grace ever shall be my constant endeavor to the utmost of my power to promote true religion and the interest of the Church of England, being in some measure sensible of my infinite obligations to Almighty God and of your noble bounty and charity to me, which shall ever be gratefully acknowledged and carefully improved by

Honrd Gentlemen

Your most obedient, humble & faithful
and laborious Servant & Missionary

Sam^{ll} Thomas.

Gentlemen,

You sent as a gift to the Indians by me stuff to make match coats, Sir. N. J's ordering my residence in these parts, I had no opportunity to dispose of the to the end for which you designed it, and finding that it was like to decay, by the advice of the Governor I had it appraised and sold it, and the money is in the hands of Sir N. J. and I am waiting for your order to return it to you, or dispose of

it as you think best. The last year I desired by a letter to Mr Hodges that £20 might be paid the Rev^d Mr Burkitt for the use of my dear wife, and £10. sent me to Carolina for my support here, with great gratitude I acknowledge your goodness in doing the former but I have had no account of the latter. 'Tis my humble request that this year you'll please to pay the whole Salary to the Rev^d Mr Burkitt for the assistance of my family and that £10. behind of the last year's salary you'll please to send me into Carolina. Sir N. J. is very noble to me and the Planters are kind to me according to their ability, for I bless God my people have an entire love for me, but they are generally poor and I have lately had a long and chargeable sickness being afflicted with a violent feaver for 10. weeks, and tho' I had the priviledge of Sir N. J's house, yet I was obliged to pay my nurse and Doctor myself which cost me much money: and my great distance from some of my people has necessitated me to buy a horse, which is here very dear, and so likewise are all sorts of cloth and linnen. For these reasons the £10. would have been welcome to me, I refer myself entirely to your bounty, charity and goodness and will continue your

Gratefull, obedient and dilligent Missionary
and humble servant.

S. Thomas. [Letters of the
Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts,
MS. Vol. I., No. 180.]

[7.]

[TO HON. JOHN HODGES.]

Addressed: For Mr Hodges &c.
London.

From my study at Sr N. Johnson's in
Carolina. 3rd May 1704.

D^r & Worthy Sir,

Yours I received by Captain Martin the

14th March last with the Parcell of Blew Hartfords—for your particular care and trouble and for the hon^{ble} Society's kindness and charity therein, I return my most sincere and hearty thanks. Before Martin came in I had wrote a Publick letter to the hon^{ble} Society in which I acquainted them that I had then heard nothing from any of my particular friends in that Body, which was more than a little concern to me. I also acquainted them with the need I stood in of the ten pounds, & with my selling the stuffs sent for presents to the Indians and lodging the money in the Gov^r's hand till their order to dispose of it. I acquainted them also with the success of my poor labors in these parts, and begged that their charity to me for this year may be paid as formerly to the Rev. Mr Burkett. For a fuller account of these things dear Sir I refer you to my Publick letter. I have received no letter from Mr Secretary Chamberlayne and therefore should have been extreamly glad that you had explained what you barely mention (viz.) an Order made by the hon^{ble} Society that my kind reception here by the Governor and People should be no precedent, which passage in your's I don't well understand. Dear Sir I am extremely obliged to you for your great kindness, particularly for your Seamens packetts, I am glad to see so noble and Christian a design on foot, and I will make the best use of them I am capable of. I long to hear how the religious Societys and those for Reformation prosper in this reign, and to have some account of the proceeding of your hon^{ble} Society, to whom I am so highly obliged, particularly if you receive a satisfactory account of the success of the Labors of your Missionaries abroad, for nothing would be more pleasing to me, than to hear that the Church flourisheth under the conduct of Pious, prudent and learned Guides: If your time will permit you to give me some account of these affairs in your next you will highly oblige me. Blessed be Divine Goodness, Good Sir I continue very happily in the Governor's family, and in the entire affections of my dear People, and opportunities of doing God and His

Church some service in this poor Province: my ministerial labors are very considerable, being obliged to preach three times a week and to ride many miles in order to the meeting my People who are at considerable distances, these Publick Offices together with my necessary studies and some personal instruction which the ignorance of many of my People makes highly necessary, takes up the whole of my time and the utmost of my strength, but I desire to praise God for nothing more than for the blessed opportunitys that He has given me of laying out my time and strength in His service. We have in the whole Province of S. Carolina but two Church of England Ministers besides myself, namely Mr Marsdon Minister of Charles Town and Mr Williams who supplieth 2. or 3. Congregations to southward near Edisto River and myself am appointed by Sir N. Johnson our Governor to take care of the Inhabitants of Cooper River. The Town Minister has a very noble maintenance settled on him out of the Publick Treasure: but we Country Ministers have nothing to trust to, but only a small and uncertain subscription. The Country stands in great need of more Ministers especially of one for a Place called Goose Creek, a Creek the best settled with Church of England familys of any in Carolina, they have a small Church built, and at the earnest request of some of the Inhabitants I lately preached there and administered the blessed Sacrament and baptized 7. children, the Congregation was so numerous that the Church could not contain them, and many stood without door the poor people were very attentive to the word of Salvation and my soul was justly moved to see the best and most numerous Congregation in all Carolina as sheep without a Shephard. My engagements are so much with my own People that I can't give them above 1. or 2. Lord's Days in a year and they very rarely have any assistance from any other Minister. I am fully satisfied that a pious, prudent and laborious Divine might do God and his Church great service: ⁴ I fear under the present charge which the

⁴ The Society acted on Mr. Thomas's suggestion and sent Rev. Francis LeJau to Goose Creek in 1706.

Country is by reason of the War, these people can't maintain a Minister entirely without some assistance from England. If you think convenient you may recommend this to the hon^{ble} Society. The Governor in a letter to my Lord of London concerning myself, which I suppose will be publickly read, acquaints his L^{dp} that we greatly want a Minister for this Place above mentioned. I shall add something more on this subject in a letter to Dr Woodward, Good Sir with humblest duty and service and gratitude to the hon^{ble} Society and yourself, I am your and their

Most obedient, dilligent & faithfull

Missionary and servant.

Sam^l Thomas. [Ibid,

No. 179.]

[8.]

[TO THE SECRETARY OF THE SOCIETY.]

Portsmouth April 20th 1706.

Honor'd Sir,

Last night (blessed be God) we arrived safe here, and it is generally said we shall sail again on Monday but we are to put in again at Plimouth, so that if you have anything to communciate to me, or any of us, it will be most likely to meet us if you direct it to Plymouth.

I had wrote to you good Sir from the Downs from whence we sailed on Thursday last but that my time was wholly taken up in waiting upon my brother a Church of England Minister at Sandwich whom I found very ill of a feaver and left dying, which affliction so oppressed my spirit that I was not capable of paying this duty to you.

We are very full of Passengers upon which account we are obliged to submit to many ill conveniencys. This day arrived from London two dissenting Ministers which Mr Boon (the gentleman which petitioned the House of Lords) sent, and we have on board a young man which he sends over also for a schoolmaster, who is a Scotch Presbyterian, by which I

suppose a judgement may be made of Mr Boon's sincerity when he pretends to be an Advocate for the Church of England in Carolina. I should rejoyce as much as any man to see religion and the power of goodness flourish under any Christian Minister's conduct of what Denomination so ever, so they be sound in the Fundamentals, but I have abundant reason to fear that Mr Boon and those few gentlemen in Carolina who employ him have a design of advancing of their particular Party by the ruins of the interest of the Church of England in that Province, and I must say that I fear, and I believe that fear is not groundless, that the encouragement which the Lords has now given him will tend much more to the discouragement of y^r Missionarys, how pious and diligent soever and to the disservice of your Church than to the real interest of Religion in general, I beg good Sir that you would not misinterpret what I have here wrote for I profess a universal respect to sincere piety and desire nothing more than the being master of good temper, and I have, and I hope I ever shall treat pious Dissenters with due respect and tenderness, but I can't but discern that some among them as well as too many among ourselves are hot and violent and so wedded to a Party that they would be glad to raise it upon the ruins of those whom it does not affect, and of this sort without the least breach of Charity, I may by long experience be truly able to say are some few in Carolina, those very persons who employ Mr Boon, oh that God may heal our bleeding division and give us the spirit of holiness, peace & unity that true religion and the fear of God may abound in our Plantations, and that all we especially who are the Missionarys of your hon^{ble} Society may by the purity of our doctrine, the strict piety of our lives and the most exemplary diligence in our holy Function answer the design of that most venerable Body which sends us. &c.

Sam: Thomas.⁵ [Ibid, MS.

Vol. II., No. 149.]

⁵ Rev. Samuel Thomas died between the date of this letter and Dec. 2, 1706, when Rev. Francis LeJau wrote to the Society an account of his death.